Mozambique suffers drought, starvation, S. Africa dependency

South African-backed destabilization wars, along with drought and starvation, have accelerated the needs of neighboring countries to strengthen their cooperation and to lessen dependence on the Republic of South Africa, an American Friends Service Committee International Affairs Representative declared.

"But the United States wants that dependency to continue," said Edgar (Ted) Lockwood, just returned from the region. "Some, such as Mozambique, have no choice, but to cooperate with the Republic."

Lockwood said a South-African backed guerrilla movement, MNR (Mozambique National Resistance), has disrupted food delivery systems and made development work and food production difficult or impossible.

"This systematic destabilization has exacerbated the problems caused by natural disasters: the worst drought in Mozambique's 50-year recorded history, and recent floods caused by a devastating cyclone," the AFSC Representative said.

Lockwood charged that "There is no question that the United States is the security manager in southern Africa, and is working with the Republic to keep it economically dominant. The U.S. should commit itself to the aims of the Southern Africa Development Conference (SADCC).

"This would mean that links to South Africa could be lessened in order that the nine SADCC nations may obtain truly regional help from donor nations, including the U.S. and others, on priorities the nine have set for themselves."

Ted Lockwood and Jerry Herman, AFSC Peace Education Southern Africa Coordinator in the U.S., attended a recent major SADCC meeting in Lusaka, Zambia. Herman and Artis Lee, AFSC, Syracuse, N.Y., were expected to return from a southern Africa visit in the next week.

About 200,000 persons are reported to have died because of starvation in Mozambique in approximately the last year. The government there predicts 100,000 more deaths by April. The AFSC is planning a small shipment of vegetable seeds as soon as possible to help alleviate the grave economic situation in the country. A major shipment of 30,000 pounds of clothing will be made in April.

Mozambique is in its third year of drought. At least 4 million people are said to be suffering in the country; about 2 million of them totally dependent on outside food sources.

Ted Lockwood said that although the SADCC nations are striving for lessened dependency on South Africa, Mozambique was forced by continuing war and destabilization tactics to enter into a security pact with the Republic, or face national suicide.

The AFSC Representative said that other South African levers against Mozambique include acts of sabotage to reduce the use of ports and a withdrawal of technical assistance persons. He added that he thinks the pact with South Africa probably will result in the Republic getting assurances that South African liberation groups will not be able to use Mozambican territory for any base of operations.

In return, it is believed that South Africa probably will not supply or train the MNR any longer, will facilitate an increase in port traffic, and will probably start putting capital into tourist attractions.

Refugee jobs

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year.

After several problems in trying to get the cottage industry and vocational training programs off the ground, SEARF finally found itself merging the two components into one economic development program. At the inception of the cottage industry program, SEARF had provided a direct subsidy to the Hmong/Mien Art/Production Sewing Cooperative. After many hours were spent on a detailed feasibility study, it was finally learned the state could not approve the use of public funds for venture capital to a private business, and the plan had to be scrapped.

Meanwhile, Portland Community College implemented a vocational training program for SEARF to train refugees in reforestation work. Tai Services, Inc., had successfully bid on several contracts funded by the Economic Recovery Act and hired about 150 refugees who received some training through the program. Morrison says that due to several internal and external problems, PCC cancelled its participation in the program in September, 1983. SEARF was thus left without either a vocational training or a cottage industry program.

Under Morrison's guidance, two profit-making cooperatives were formed consisting solely of refugees needing vocational training: the Hmong/Mien Sewing Cooperative and the Forestry Cooperative. The guiding concept, says Morrison, is to employ refugees while they are getting on-the-job training fulfilling production orders placed by existing American companies. The trainees are all members of the cooperatives and share equally in the profits from the work produced. Refugees also develop skills and expertise in managing the cooperatives.

So far, the concept seems to be working—according to the annual report, more than $50,000 in earnings were distributed to the participants last year. Most of the products so far have been specialty items produced on order.

Morrison notes the concept is so completely different from conventional vocational training programs that the Private Industry Council (which administers the Reagan version of CETA-the Job Placement Training Act (JPTA) rejected funding it altogether. Under the JPTA, regional Private Industry Councils grant funds for vocational training programs which train people for jobs and then try to find placement for them.

With SEARF's program, jobs are built into the training process, and a new business is created too. SEARF's program thus actually creates jobs for trainees rather than simply training them for a job they may or may not ever get, said Morrison.

The Private Industry Council rejection of SEARF's program slowed it down cnsiderably, but it didn't leave SEARF high and dry. In fact, Morrison has been busy attracting several large grants from foundations throughout the United States. The largest chunk of assistance is a $500,000 loan from the Ford Foundation to be used over three years as a loan fund for refugee businesses. Ford also granted $25,000 in loan default protection which is matched by the City of Portland.

The Fred Meyer Charitable Trust contributed $120,000 for use over three years, and one-year grants have been made by the Collins Trust ($3,000) and the Oregon Community Foundation ($10,000). The State of Oregon has committed $100,000 over the next two years to the program and $50,000 is coming from the office of Refugee Relief of the U.S. department of Health and Human Sevices.

Howard University was founded in 1867 under the name Howard Theological Seminary.